

JOINT CALL FOR AN AMBITIOUS EU 2040 CLIMATE TARGET

The need for ambitious global climate action has never been more evident. 2023 proved to be the warmest year on record. Global warming is set to intensify a number of adverse effects putting the welfare and security of the world at risk.

At its meeting on 14.-15. December 2023, the European Council welcomed the conclusions from the first Global Stocktake concluded at COP28 in particular the agreement to accelerate emission reductions towards net zero by 2050 in line with the best available science, to keep the 1.5 °C objective within reach.

It is crucial that the EU translates this into concrete ambitious action to send a strong political signal that the EU will lead by example to convince other large emitters to follow suit to ensure the necessary contributions to keep 1.5 °C alive in a timely manner before COP30.

However, we can only persuade others to step up if we get the job done at home. Therefore, we strongly encourage the European Commission in its upcoming communication to recommend an ambitious EU climate target for 2040. At the same time, we must ensure a proper implementation of the “Fit for 55” legislative package. This is important for the EU’s credibility at international level as well as the acceptability of increasing the effort.

The target should be in line with the long-term temperature goal of 1.5 °C and take into account the principles in the European Climate Law, such as best available science, cost-effectiveness, a fair and just transition and the costs of inaction, as well as the advice of the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change.

The target should also ensure that the EU is fully on track to climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest aiming to achieve negative emissions thereafter. The Commission’s communication should enable the EU to communicate an NDC with a 2035 ambition to follow up on the decision at COP 26 on the five- year timeframes for National Determined Contributions. An ambitious target will also contribute to the phasing out of fossil fuels.

Along with an efficient and sustained effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, which remains the key lever for achieving our climate targets, removals will also be needed to reach climate neutrality.

Stepping up ambition will be a considerable task. To lead the way we need to ensure that climate action is an opportunity for all. The green transition should thus continue to be economically feasible, costs manageable and leave no one behind especially the most vulnerable citizens.

Ambitious climate action will allow to benefit from synergies between these policies and other environmental priorities as well as reduce future climate impacts, particularly on the most vulnerable. Therefore, supporting the green transition and tackling distributional effects must be an important priority.

Meeting our climate goals in a cost-effective way is essential to economic growth, energy security and increasing the EU’s industrial competitiveness. It will be key to safeguard the EU’s resilience, fully reap the benefits of the green transition through rules-based trade and strengthen the EU’s open strategic autonomy as well as providing us with a competitive advantage on a global scale.

It will send a strong signal to the market to increase the EU's domestic development and manufacturing of net-zero technologies paving the way of increasing EU's competitiveness as well as making the EU the most attractive hub for the development and production of net-zero technologies. In addition, it will bring multiple benefits to EU's citizens including a healthier environment as well as future-proof employment opportunities in green sectors and industries.

We therefore also encourage the Commission to give an overall guidance in its communication on a more cost-effective and reliable approach to EU's climate policy across all sectors to make the EU fit for a competitive and climate neutral future taking into account national circumstances.

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Julian Popov, Minister of Environment and Water of Bulgaria

Robert Habeck, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of Germany

Lars Aagaard, Minister for Climate, Energy and Utilities of Denmark

Teresa Ribera, Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of Spain and Minister for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge

Kai Mykkänen, Minister of Climate and the Environment of Finland

Christophe Béchu, Minister for the Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion of France

Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications of Ireland

Serge Wilmes, Minister of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity of Luxembourg

Rob Jetten, Minister for Climate and Energy Policy of the Netherlands

Duarte Cordeiro, Minister of Environment and Climate Action of Portugal